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CHAPTER 1:
Can We Talk?

What percentage of communication is oral and what percentage is written?

Think about your typical day. Start at your home. How often do you communicate with people around you in writing? As a parent, are you handing notes to your children? E-mailing them? Texting them? Occasionally, perhaps, but overwhelmingly you are talking to them. Are you using paper and pencil to communicate with your spouse or roommate? Maybe you leave a note on the counter as a reminder to take out the garbage, but when the discussion shifts to whose turn it is and who took it out last week, you talk.

And when you get to school, how do you interact with coworkers and teammates? Yes, you can iChat them with a quick question, but the vast majority of your interaction is verbal. You tell stories about what happened of interest in your classroom today, you discuss team plans for the future, and you ask your colleagues about their home lives. How do you interact with the principal? If you write an e-mail to an administrator, isn’t it often a request for a face-to-face meeting? And what about your students’ families? They want to talk to you. Send a note sometime and suggest that you don’t need to meet them and would rather handle things with e-mail. Imagine the response. Your students’ parents want to hear your voice.

Step back in time. How did you select your mate? After many long conversations, right? How did you get your job? A résumé might have gotten you in the door, but an interview most likely got you the job. Your ability to speak well (or at least better than the other people applying)
was crucial to getting hired. How many other significant events in your life can you think of in which your ability to speak well mattered? A wedding toast? A eulogy? Inspiring the tee ball team you got conned into coaching? If these events haven't occurred yet in your life, they will. There are many, many opportunities for meaningful speeches in a normal life. Simply put, oral communication is our predominant way of communicating.

LETS STOP SQUEEZING OUT PUBLIC SPEAKING

Now, let me make a radical statement: the mission of education should not be to make students better at school but rather to prepare them for life. As schools focus on high-stakes testing, there is a tendency to forget that mission and to see the test as the ultimate outcome of our instruction. As a result, many important parts of a well-rounded education that do not directly contribute to the test score can end up on the cutting room floor, including art, music, physical education, home economics, health, and civics. Another skill commonly sacrificed is speaking.

There is some evidence that the atmosphere is changing. Colorado, my home state, revised its state standards in 2010. The 1995 standard “Reading and Writing” became “Reading, Writing, and Communicating,” and “Oral Expression” is the first thing mentioned under the standard. The Common Core State Standards Initiative suggests adopting the standard “Speaking and Listening.” More than forty states had adopted the Common Core Standards by the end of 2010. Some school districts have added formal speaking assessments to the curriculum, though such districts are still the exception, not the rule. I believe that, to a large extent, these changes are driven by a new concern for workplace readiness and a desire to think beyond the classroom and beyond the high-stakes test.

While speaking skills may have been somewhat underemphasized in schools, they have not been underemphasized in the real world. Look at the business section of your local bookstore. There are many, many books on the shelves about public speaking. Some focus on general presentation skills, some on specific skills like closing the deal, some on overcoming fear, and some on speaking in social settings. All of them recognize the importance of being well spoken.

CHAPTER 1: CAN WE TALK?

Speaking well enables us to communicate clearly with coworkers and avoid misunderstandings on the job. Speaking well enables us to feel more confident and become more respectable. (I recall a conversation with our school psychologist, who told me that she felt my opinions had more power than those of my colleagues because I spoke so well. She didn't say my opinions were better. They just seemed better, which I suppose is still a compliment.) Speaking well enables us to be more impressive over the telephone and in video conferences. Speaking well is crucial to professional promotion. No CEO of a corporation can lead without strong oral communication. No attorney can persuade a jury; no politician can be elected, and no coach can motivate a team without strong speaking skills. Even in professions that we don't think of as highly verbal, oral communication matters. Wouldn't you prefer to do business with an electrician who speaks well? A landscaper? A hairdresser?

Why not make clear to students how important speaking is to professional success? Students often believe that what we teach in school has no relevance to their lives in the “real world,” and to a large extent, they may be right. I'm willing to bet that people who speak well have more professional and social success in life than people who don't. That's relevance.

Every year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys employers to see what qualities they want most from college students they are considering for employment. Employers responding to NACE's Job Outlook 2011 survey suggest that “New college graduates looking to crack the still-tight job market need to hone their verbal communication skills... verbal communication skills topped the list of 'soft' skills they seek in new college graduates looking to join their organizations” (National Association of Colleges and Employers 2010). Strong work ethic, teamwork skills, analytical skills, and initiative, while all critical skills, followed verbal communication in importance. If students master speaking, their chances of success increase dramatically.

Further support for the value of speaking skills comes from a study of 104 Silicon Valley employers. Silicon Valley is the home of many of America's high-tech firms, and you might expect that they would place a high value on math and engineering skills, right? Company
representatives were asked several questions about desired qualities in prospective employees. The question “What additional business communication skills would you like to see in your recent college graduate new hires?” produced interesting results:

Employers sought improved oral presentation skills more frequently than they did written skills. Their comments expressed a need for stronger skills in public speaking, enhanced interpersonal skills, increased confidence, and improved interviewing skills. Several wrote that students needed more presentation skills, highlighting the ability to use software tools like PowerPoint. This was surprising, because the popular press talks more about a lack of writing skills among college graduates than about insufficient oral skills. (Stevens 2005, 7; emphasis added)

On a personal note, my former student Kelly affirmed my belief in the value of teaching speaking. She looked me up twenty-one years after being in my middle school English class. She wanted to tell me about her marriage and her master’s degree, and she wanted to let me know that I had influenced her more than any other teacher. Kelly took me out to dinner and told me that she believed that what I taught her in my English class was more responsible for her success than anything else she had learned. Of course, I was curious. Was it alliteration? The plot line diagram? Identifying main characters? Writing topic sentences? No, Kelly said the most vital skill she had learned from me was how to speak well and be comfortable in front of people. Let me be clear: I am not saying that we should forget about all those other critical language skills. But while those are all essential, Kelly picked speaking skills as the most important.

“LIKE, WE KNOW THEY CAN, LIKE, TALK, BUT HOW DO I TEACH THEM TO SPEAK?”

Consider that teachers spend untold hours showing students how to communicate through writing. We have specific lessons about commas, capitalization, word choice, topic sentences, and so on, as we should.

But public speaking? Well, we might have one required speech during the year that we grade based on a rubric that mentions eye contact. In my experience, however, very few teachers specifically teach the skills needed to make that speech more successful. After the speech, we might give some comments as feedback, but that’s about it, right? Where are the specific lessons about hand gestures, analyzing the audience, or using pacing for emphasis?

All students can talk (sometimes we need to ask them to stop!) and, therefore, teachers often assume they don’t need to offer instruction in verbal communication. But listen to what they say: “I’m all like, whoa, what is that about, but he is like, whatever, I don’t know what you mean, so I like get all mad and ready to, like, leave but suddenly he, like, changes, know what I mean?”

Are you impressed? Could your students benefit from some more instruction?

Imagine walking into a ninth-grade English class to observe the teacher. As you enter, the teacher informs you that he will not be teaching writing this year because the students already know how to write. The teacher can prove this and shows you the “What I did this summer” paragraphs, text messages, and entries from online chat rooms. That seems absurd, doesn’t it? It is equally absurd when you imagine the teacher saying this about speaking: “I will not be teaching speaking this year because my students already know how to speak.” Students need direct instruction to help them speak effectively, just as they need direct instruction to learn how to write effectively.

THE PARTS OF A SPEECH

Perhaps I have persuaded you that developing effective speaking skills is worth more time than it usually receives in classrooms, but there is still the issue of how to teach speaking. That is where this book comes in. Effective speaking involves specific skills. This book explains these skills and how to teach them. I have not written a workbook full of handouts to give to students. Books like that already exist, and to find them you may want to check the teacher’s helper store in your community. Such workbooks leave something to be desired, however. Yes, they include speaking activities and attractive reproducible worksheets,
but they offer little or no direction about how to prepare students to perform the activities. This book provides a framework for teaching speaking and ensuring that students understand what the workbooks are talking about.

I developed the ideas in this book during twenty-one years as a classroom teacher—primarily as an English teacher, but I also taught math, science, and civics—and during ten years as an educational consultant. I have worked directly with thousands of students and have taught hundreds of teachers how to teach speaking skills to students.

But education was my second career. I started in the business world as the manager of a commodity brokerage firm, and oral communication was a crucial part of the job. My speaking ability helped me become the national sales leader for my firm. When I moved to the classroom, I incorporated speaking activities in all the subjects I taught. I discovered that the skills described by the acronym PVLEGS (poise, voice, life, eye contact, gestures, and speed), which I discuss in Part III, provided students of all ages with a simple way to grasp the elements of effective speaking. In addition, middle and high school students gained the confidence and skills to be highly successful in speaking contests sponsored by groups such as the Optimist Club and DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America). And of course, like Kelly, former students would mention that the concepts worked in later life, too.

My hope is that this book will be useful for all teachers, from elementary grades through high school. The examples tend to be from the middle school level for two reasons: that is where most of my personal teaching experience occurred, and middle school level concepts and activities can usually be modified to suit other levels. After reading in Chapter 5 about the organization component of building a speech, the second-grade teacher may decide to ignore the transitions part and focus on having students grasp the need for an introduction, body, and conclusion (a beginning, middle, and end in second-grade language). The high school teacher may gloss over the basic format of a speech and teach a lesson about using sophisticated transitions. After reading in Chapter 13 about the speed component of performing a speech, the elementary teacher may focus only on the need to avoid speaking too fast, whereas the high school teacher can work on developing dramatic pauses.

The book is also intended to be useful for those who work with students in after-school clubs. DECA, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), Robotics, Odyssey of the Mind, and more all have opportunities for students to showcase oral skills. In many competitions, judges base their decision on who has the better presentation, not on who has the better product.

YOU CAN DO THIS!

Have you ever been amazed that, after something was pointed out to you, you hadn't thought of it before? There may be moments like that as you read this book. “Of course! Why didn't I teach that?” There will be some speaking components that you knew in the back of your mind but never consciously thought about and some speaking skills that you assumed everyone already knew. What I hope to do is make the art of speaking understandable and make your teaching of speaking purposeful.

Let me emphasize two important points. First, when I mention public speaking throughout the book, I am not referring only to a formal presentation in front of a large audience. Public speaking encompasses a wide variety of genres, from interviews, discussions, debates, toasts, stage presentations, answering questions in class, negotiating business deals, all the way up to standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in front of half a million people. In other words, I am referring to all the forms of speaking beyond casual banter with friends. Elements of public speaking are involved in all of those situations.

Second, you don't have to be a master orator to teach speaking. You simply have to understand how master orators create their magic, and you have to be willing to commit to improving the oral communication skills of your students. But you may find after reading this book that you have become a better speaker, too, and back-to-school night will never frighten or intimidate you again.
CHAPTER 2:
Effective Communication

Take a look at the following two essays.

SAMPLE ESSAY 1

The war in Iraq was a good idea. Saddam Hussein was a bad man. He did bad things to people in his country. He said he wanted to attack America and send terrorists to attack us. That might have killed a lot of Americans. The United States is for freedom. We should give freedom to Iraq. For these reasons, we should attack Iraq.

SAMPLE ESSAY 2

The situation in Iraq is extremely complex. While it is true that Hussein is a ruthless dictator he was holding together a country that has several warring factions for 1300 years. Shiites and sunnis have been in a religious war and the ethnic Kurds have been battling Iraqis, without a strong man the country would break into a civil war. Looking at what might have happened without him, he may actually have been good for Iraq. When the United States attacked the balance was irretrievably upset and we may have caused problems that can't be solved.
WELL SPOKEN

What grade would you give each essay? Essay 1 is perfectly capitalized, perfectly spelled, perfectly punctuated. Should Essay 1 receive an A grade? Essay 2 is full of problems with capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Should that paper get an F? Most of us would have a hard time accepting those grades. Essay 1 indicates very little understanding of the problems involved in the Iraq War debate. Does that mean it deserves an F? Essay 2 demonstrates an understanding of the problem, but does it deserve an A? Again, most of us would say no.

Years ago, teachers were making decisions exactly like this. They assessed a piece of writing with only one grade. Maybe both essays would get a C, albeit for very different reasons. At some point, teachers realized that writing is a collection of various parts, which means that a single grade is not always useful. Rather, we must examine the parts. Content, word choice, sentence structure, writing conventions, paragraphing, organization, and perhaps other traits must be analyzed separately.

Look back at the two essays. If I graded each essay based on two aspects of writing, Essay 1 would get top marks for writing conventions but low marks for content. Essay 2 would get the reverse. The grades entered in the grade book might end up being the same, but if the teacher explained how the two aspects of writing were assessed, the students would have an understanding of what the grades represented. With specific writing traits delineated, the authors can focus on areas of strength and weakness.

A multiple-trait framework was a great advancement in writing instruction. Effective speaking is also a collection of various parts, so let me suggest, then, a multiple-trait framework for speaking. A new way of looking at oral communication will make it easier to teach the skills involved and will make it easier for students to become competent communicators.

In Figure 2.1, you will see a rubric currently used by a prominent school district near my home.

CHAPTER 2: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

FIGURE 2.1: GENERIC RUBRIC FOR SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

ADVANCED
- The student delivers the speech effectively to inform, explain, demonstrate, or persuade.
- The student organizes the formal speech using an introduction, body, and conclusion with transitions and well-integrated evidence.
- Subject, vocabulary, and delivery are adapted effectively to the audience and the occasion.

PROFICIENT
- The student delivers the speech appropriately to inform, explain, demonstrate, or persuade.
- The student organizes the formal speech using an introduction, body, and conclusion with transitions and evidence.
- Subject, vocabulary, and delivery are adapted appropriately to the audience and the occasion.

BASIC
- The student delivers the speech to inform, explain, demonstrate, or persuade.
- The student organizes the formal speech using a beginning, middle, and end.
- The student's vocabulary and delivery convey the message.

PRE-BASIC
- The student attempts to inform, explain, demonstrate, or persuade through a formal speech.
- Organization of the speech lacks a beginning, middle, and/or end.

I will comment much more extensively on rubrics in Chapter 15. Here I want to focus on the elements of effective speaking. According to the rubric in Figure 2.1, an advanced speaker "effectively" delivers the speech, but a proficient speaker "appropriately" delivers the speech. Is this a useful distinction? I am not sure that a student would know what distinguishes effective subject, vocabulary, and delivery from appropriate subject, vocabulary, and delivery. The advanced speech
has "well-integrated evidence," but the proficient only has "evidence." Again, I am not sure a student will understand the difference. Unfortunately, we often give rubrics to our students with descriptors that make no sense to them.

Focusing more specifically on our purpose in this book, this rubric doesn't accurately reflect the components of a good speech. Subject, vocabulary, and delivery are lumped together in one bullet point. Those are radically different things. Think back to the sample essays about Iraq and imagine grading them using a rubric bullet point that includes "content and punctuation are appropriate for the purpose." It seems absurd now, in the multiple-trait writing world, to put those together, and it is equally absurd to group subject, vocabulary, and delivery in a rubric meant to evaluate speaking skills. Delivery alone has several components. The solution is to break the art of speaking into meaningful pieces and to develop a multiple-trait framework for oral communication.

Public speaking can be divided into two distinct categories: building a speech and performing a speech. Both parts are crucial to understanding effective speech, yet teachers often miss the distinction. Most of us realize that presidents have speechwriters. Most of us know there are screenwriters and playwrights who compose the lines actors deliver. Most of us realize that some person has written the news that the newscaster reads off the teleprompter. Obviously, these written words are only the beginning. After that, someone must perform the speech, deliver the lines, or read aloud the news. The performing talent is very different than the writing talent. The person who builds the speech for the president or the newscaster might have a very difficult time performing the speech himself or herself. Conversely, though the newscaster might look good and sound good, he or she may be a terrible writer, just as the actor who can beautifully deliver the lines may have no ability to write a script.

We may have realized intuitively that these two parts of speaking are distinct, but we may not have paid close attention to the distinction. Look back at the speaking rubric in Figure 2.1. Does the rubric indicate an understanding of the two main components of public speaking, building a speech and performing it? Unfortunately, no. Our first job is to clarify the difference between building a speech and performing a speech.

You will have students who are great at building a speech and dreadful at performing it. You will have students who are masterful performers but have nothing of value to say. These situations should come as no surprise. They are no different than having a student who can spell perfectly but who shows weak word choice, or having a student with sophisticated content in his or her writing but a limited ability to spell. We won't succeed at teaching students well until we can be specific about which skills need to be improved.
PART II
BUILDING A SPEECH

Before I open my mouth to speak, there are several things I need to do. I refer to these preparatory tasks as the “building a speech” stage. Obviously, I must have something to say. If I want my comments to be worth listening to, I have to choose the most effective words. But because speakers are also seen, building a good speech involves more than just assembling words. I break the process into five parts:

- Audience: Understanding the Listeners
- Content: Making the Message Valuable
- Organization: Making the Speech Easy to Follow
- Visual Aids: Enhancing the Words
- Appearance: Dressing for the Occasion

Each of these parts is important. It may seem daunting to have five new skills to teach, but some of the elements overlap with the elements of building an effective piece of writing. And for those of you who are worried about the state assessment, this is the first of many times that I will point out: Teaching speaking reinforces teaching writing.
CHAPTER 3:

Audience: Understanding the Listeners

Do you speak the same way in your classroom as you do in the teachers' lounge? You probably would not still have your job if you did. If you were asked to give a five-minute speech on student behavior, wouldn't your first question be, "For whom?" For new teachers? For the PTO? For students in your class? For the comedy club? It makes a difference. At some level, we all know that speech must be adjusted to suit the situation.

Students do not have a hard time grasping this concept. Your students will readily admit that the language they use with Grandma is different from the language they use with their friends. Most are sophisticated enough to know that you "work" Dad differently than you "work" Mom. Intuitively, they understand that the audience we are addressing affects our speech. Therefore, the first part of building a speech involves purposefully analyzing the audience.

Consider the questions in Figure 3.1.

FIGURE 3.1: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE BEFORE YOU SPEAK
Professional speakers typically ask these questions before they speak:

- What is the average age of the audience members?
- What is the age range?
- What percentage is male and what percentage is female?
- What is the educational level of the audience?
- What does the audience already know about the topic?
Chapter 8:

Poise: Appearing Calm and Confident

If you check the library or search online, you will find many books and articles about overcoming the fear of public speaking. Almost all of the articles will include phrases similar to these:

Statistics show that public speaking is the number one fear of adults.

According to statistics, fear of speaking ranks higher in people's minds than the fear of death.

According to national surveys, fear of public speaking ranks among Americans' top fears, surpassing fear of heights, fear of flying, and fear of terrorism.

None of the articles or books actually cite the source of the "statistics." It seems highly unlikely that anyone would choose to die if asked whether they would prefer to give a speech or to be put to death. But the point is clear; many people fear giving a speech. The fear of public speaking is greatly overstated, though. In spite of the terror and dread that is supposedly out there, I have never had one student fail to give an assigned speech. Not one. Every student (and every adult) I have worked with has been successful at performing the speech when the time came. Not all were master orators, but all were able to overcome their fears.
evaluations more useful for students.

**PUSHING FOR MORE PRECISION**
The skills of oral expression should not be defined differently in Mrs. Smith's and Mr. Johnson's fourth-grade classes, in Mr. Janick's social studies class and Mr. Avery's English class, in Ms. Mooney's sixth-grade class and Ms. Pond's eleventh-grade class. It's often the case that last year's teacher said a good speech should include a costume, eye contact, speaking loudly, and historical facts; this year's teacher said a good speech includes content, eye contact, expression, a good opening, and visual aids; and next year's teacher will say a good speech includes understanding the topic, standing up straight, eye contact, loud volume, not saying “um” and “uh,” and speaking distinctly. Over the years our students get an idea of what it takes to be an effective oral communicator, but if we were more consistent, they would master the skills. It will be easier for them to meet the oral expression standards if all of their teachers use the same language. Let me suggest some new generic rubrics and score sheets that can be easily modified as the grade levels and subjects warrant and that will provide a consistent framework for students as they move through the educational system and beyond.

We can start by creating evaluations that reflect the two main parts of all oral communication. The basic structure could look like Figure 15.5. Teachers who like to assign points could make the categories worth whatever value they wish.

**FIGURE 15.5: BASIC RUBRIC FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUILDING A SPEECH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the basic structure of Figure 15.5, teachers can add descriptors of the important requirements. In the next class or next grade level, while the descriptors may change, the basic understanding of the components of a good speech remains the same. Figure 15.6 shows two examples of how the content box can be adapted, depending on the assignment.

For teachers who assign multiple speeches within the year, the same score sheets can be used and easily modified. The majority of the components of effective oral communication don't change from speech to speech. For instance, the requirements of organization don't change from speech to speech, nor do the expectations of eye contact. This means that the basic rubric form, once built, is applicable in a wide range of activities (see Figure 15.7).
Eye contact
Looked at each member of audience at some point (5)
Did not focus only on teacher or a few students (5)

Gestures
Used hands in meaningful ways (5)
Facial expressions contributed to speech (5)
Body gestures helped message (5)

Speed
Not too fast (5)
Adjusted speed to enhance message (5)
Pauses created dramatic effect (5)

Naturally, the language within the boxes of Figure 15.7 can be modified as appropriate for your students; number values can be adjusted to emphasize the parts you think are most important. Using a score sheet like this will give students a clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses, just as the multiple-trait rubric for writing increases students’ understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their written work.

The same elements can be structured differently to fit the requirements in most districts. While there is no agreement nationwide on the labels (e.g., advanced, proficient, basic, pre-basic; advanced, proficient, partially proficient, in-progress), a four-point rubric can and should be developed using the framework I’ve described. The rubric for performing a speech, once created for each grade level, will work across the curriculum. Figure 15.8 shows an example of a rubric from a workshop I conducted with ninth-grade teachers. Notice that the content box is generic, allowing the rubric to be used in a variety of assignments. Figure 15.9 shows the performance rubric they created to use in all classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUILDING A SPEECH</th>
<th>4 ADVANCED</th>
<th>3 PROFICIENT</th>
<th>2 BASIC</th>
<th>1 EMERGING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| AUDIENCE          | • speech perfectly designed for this specific audience  
                   • key points understandable  
                   • several clear connections to this audience  
                   • speech clearly designed for this audience  
                   • one or two points or key terms should have been more clearly explained  
                   • two or three attempts to connect with the audience  
                   • all required content included  
                   • purpose of speech clear  
                   • some extraneous material included  
                   • most required content included  
                   • audience could figure out the purpose  
                   • unnecessary information presented  
                   • verbal viruses present but not problematic  
                   • good choice of organizational structure  
                   • opening grabbed the listeners  
                   • explicit and frequent signposts  
                   • some signposts  
                   • powerful closing  
                   • good choice of organizational structure  
                   • opening grabbed the listeners  
                   • ineffective opening  
                   • infrequent signposts  
                   • ineffective closing  
                   • visual aids relevant  
                   • aids clarified important concepts  
                   • aids appropriate for the audience and the room  
                   • well designed  
                   • visual aids relevant  
                   • aids clarified important concepts  
                   • aids understandable for most of the audience  
                   • most of the audience could see the aids  
                   • well designed  
                   • student looked sharp  
                   • dress appropriate for the speech  
                   • added something above and beyond expectations  
                   • student looked sharp  
                   • dress appropriate for the speech  
                   • student took care to adjust appearance before speech  
                   • no attempt to change appearance for the occasion  
                   • no evidence that particular audience considered  
                   • no attempt to explain things for this audience  
                   • no connectors  
                   • important omissions of required content  
                   • unable to understand purpose of speech  
                   • random information in speech  
                   • verbal viruses detracted from speech  
                   • disorganized  
                   • ineffective opening  
                   • no signposts  
                   • speech just stopped  
                   • no visual aid or irrelevant aids  
                   • sloppy and hard to see |
**Figure 15.3: Performance Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PVLEGS</th>
<th><strong>4 Advanced</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 Proficient</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| POISE  | • student calm and confident  
          • no distracting behaviors  
          • no shuffling, fidgeting, wiggling  | • student calm and confident  
          • only one or two distracting behaviors that did not diminish overall performance |
| VOICE  | • voice perfect for the room  
          • every word clear and distinct  | • voice perfect for the room  
          • a few words blurred/indistinct |
| LIFE   | • great expression  
          • many emotions expressed  
          • excellent feeling  | • good expression  
          • some feeling evident in parts of speech |
| EYE CONTACT | • looked at each member of the audience at some point  
              • eye contact continuous  | • looked at each member of the audience  
              • eye contact made for most of the speech |
| GESTURES | • excellent use of hands for descriptive and emphatic purposes  
            • facial expressions added to message  
            • body language contributed to message  | • good use of hands  
            • some facial gestures  
            • limited body language |
| SPEED  | • not too fast or too slow  
          • varied pacing to enhance message  
          • paused for dramatic effect  | • not too fast or too slow  
          • some attempt to adjust pace for effect  
          • no pauses |

**Chapter 15: Evaluating Speeches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 BASIC</th>
<th>1 EMERGING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • student somewhat ill-at-ease  
          • occasionally distracted the audience  | • student ill-at-ease  
          • many and repeated distracting behaviors greatly detracting from performance |
| • voice a bit too soft/loud  
          • several words and phrases indistinct  | • had a hard time hearing the speech  
          • many words and phrases unclear |
| • some attempt at expression  
          • some attempt at adding emotion in speech  | • tone monotonous  
          • no expression  
          • no attempt to add feeling to voice |
| • looked at most members of the audience  
          • looked at notes too much  | • script-bound  
          • never looked at most of audience |
| • some hand gestures  
          • facial expressions and body language minimal  | • no gestures  
          • no attempt to use facial expression  
          • no use of body motions |
| • not too fast or too slow  
          • no attempt to adjust pace  
          • no pauses  | • spoke too quickly  
          • no pacing or pauses |
The descriptors in the rubric boxes will change depending on the grade level. What is advanced poise for a first grader (few wiggles, minimal fidgeting) is quite different than advanced poise for an eleventh grader (no wiggles, no fidgeting). You (and your colleagues) can craft language appropriate for your students. Look for more sample rubrics at www.pvlegs.com. If you have a rubric to share, please send it to me to post.

CHAPTER 16:
Speaking Activities Across the Curriculum

It doesn't matter what subject is being taught—math, science, social studies, language arts, health, industrial technology, Spanish, art—all classes involve speaking. The activity ideas in this chapter can be adapted to any subject area. I have avoided mentioning activities that I think we all know about: book reports, research projects, biography projects, and so on. Those are so common that I don't need to tell you how they work. Instead, I offer some varied ways that I have taught public speaking in classes. Some may be new to you or add a different twist to a familiar activity. In the parentheses following each subheading, I have indicated the speaking skill(s) most relevant to the activity. I hope you'll try some of these activities in your class as you expand your teaching of public speaking.

1. MODELING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (ALL)
I was a young boy when I first heard Martin Luther King Jr. speak, and he quickly became my hero. Every year that I taught, I used his "I Have a Dream" speech to show students the power of public speaking. The text can be found easily online and in several books in your library. Read it with your students.

Ask students to think about the audience King had to address and the complexity of his challenge: blacks who supported him in his peace movement, and blacks who were becoming militant and violent; whites who supported him, and whites who were screaming at him; lawmakers
he wanted to move to action. Ask students to look for places in the speech that address each of those audience segments. Notice the connectors. Where does King indicate that he understands the audience’s perspective?

Examine the content. What was his purpose in speaking? What are his main points?

Review the organization of the speech. It's a brilliant composition. Everyone knows the repetition of the phrase, “I have a dream,” but few realize that King used a similar organizational strategy throughout the speech. “One hundred years later,” “we can never be satisfied,” and “let freedom ring” are also repeated, breaking the speech into memorable sections.

Although King used no overt visual aids, his appearance was important. If possible, show students a video of King delivering his “I Have a Dream” speech from the Lincoln Memorial. How did he dress? Why did he always wear a black suit, white shirt, and black tie?

You can also discuss the performance. Talk about the poise King demonstrated in front of 500,000 people and a television audience. Discuss the power of his voice. Life? He is one of the most dynamic speakers your students will ever hear. Eye contact and gestures aren’t a major part of this speech because of the venue. Point that out. Also discuss King’s tremendous use of speed and pacing for effect. Analyzing this speech is a unique way to celebrate Martin Luther King Day and any other occasion of the year.

2. ANALYZE OTHER SPEAKERS (ALL)
Your students will analyze other speakers for you. They will come into your class and say, “Did you see the president’s speech last night?” or “Did you see Miss South Carolina?” Once students become aware of the art of public speaking, they will analyze all of the performances they see. Look at newscasters, TV hosts, and other speakers, and spend a few minutes discussing their PVLEGs.

3. THINK, PAIR, SHARE (CONTENT, EYE CONTACT)
Provide a thought-provoking question to the class. The question could be related to a unit of study, but it also might be a random but engaging question. Give students a few moments to think about the question, and then ask them to find a partner. I always like to have the kids decide which one of them will be Person A and which Person B. Once that is decided, I say, “Okay, B, you go first. Explain to your partner your thinking in response to our question.” After a couple of minutes, I say, “Okay, B, you stop and let A explain.” The idea is to get them to come to a consensus about the answer to the question. Have them think about the statements that seemed the most valuable in reaching agreement. Finally, the entire class regroups for a discussion.

For the whole-class discussion, some days I say, “Person A will talk today. If you are Person A, tell us what you and your partner decided.” Some days I call on Person B. This eliminates the problem of having only the highly verbal students dominate the discussion.

4. WHAT HAPPENED HERE? (LIFE)
Find interesting photographs from newspapers and magazines. Build a large collection of these odd photos. Ask students to think of a brief story that would explain the photo. How did the shoe end up on top of that pole? How did the child get his head stuck in that chair? Call on volunteers to share their ideas focusing on the speaking skill of life.

5. BROWN BAG INTRODUCTIONS (VISUAL AIDS)
This is a great idea for a get-to-know-you activity at the beginning of the year. Tell students to bring in a brown lunch bag that contains five or six items that represent who they are. The items could be pictures, equipment they use, mini versions of objects that are important to them, and so on. Each student takes a turn at the front of the class and reveals the contents while explaining the significance of the items. Remind students of the effective ways to use visual aids while speaking.

6. SHOW AND TELL (VISUAL AIDS)
This is really retro . . . but really engaging. When I taught eighth grade, I was surprised when a student came to me and asked if she could bring in something to show her classmates. I said yes, and after her presentation, many other students asked if they could bring in something. I thought about it. Show and tell might cost me five minutes, but the
benefits are huge. It lets kids be kids; it creates connections between kids; it improves class atmosphere; it lets students showcase their lives outside of school; it helps the teacher connect with the students. It is also another chance to work on presentation skills, in particular, the use of visual aids while speaking. Give each speaker advice on how to present the item in a way that all students can appreciate it, for example.

7. DIGITAL STORYTELLING (LIFE, CONTENT, ORGANIZATION)
Many more opportunities for oral expression exist because of free online tools and inexpensive cameras and recorders. While it is always dangerous to list Web sites—by the time you get to print, the site is gone, has added a fee, or been outdone by a newer site—I will mention a couple that offer interesting and engaging options. Personal stories, book talks, creative writing assignments, third-person retelling, and more can all be done with images and voice recording. At Animoto (www.animoto.com), pictures and video clips can be uploaded and sound can be added. At ZooBurst (www.zooburst.com), students can create online “pop-up” books and record their voices to animate the character in the book they create. Sites such as PhotoPeach (www.photopeach.com) and Imageloop (www.imageloop.com) allow students to upload photos and make slideshows with sound. With digital recorders such as Flip and Bloggie cameras that have built-in USB arms, students can make videos and instantly upload them to a class wiki or Web page. In addition to offering a speaking opportunity beyond getting up in front of the class, the excitement of speaking in front of a potentially large audience—anyone with access to the site—and the excitement of having immortality—the in-class speech lasts three minutes but the posted video lasts forever—can motivate many students to become more verbal. The traditional “What I Did This Summer” essay becomes an online slideshow or video with student narration. Follow your school’s or district’s policies about online safety.

8. ONLINE DISCUSSIONS (CONTENT, LIFE, AUDIENCE)
Certainly class discussions will improve with improved speaking skills. Those discussions can move beyond the classroom and into the online world with free tools in the “cloud.” VoiceThread (www.voicethread.com) allows users to upload images and video and record comments about them. Then visitors to the created page can record responses and continue the discussion. For example, a teacher could upload an image of an oil-covered bird and start a discussion of offshore drilling. Students could be given an assignment to access the page, respond to the image, and react specifically to the comments of at least two classmates. Students who are quiet in class often blossom when given a chance to speak in this arena. Unlike a class discussion, the comment can be practiced, and the comment can be deleted if a mistake is made. Students will quickly realize that a good point becomes a great point if it’s passionately spoken.

9. PODCASTING (LIFE)
Many students have computers with the ability to make podcasts. Most Apple computers come with a software program called GarageBand, which makes it extremely easy to produce a broadcast with voice and pictures that can be sent via e-mail or downloaded to an MP3 player or iPod. You don’t have to teach GarageBand—many of your students are already masters. Just let them turn in a podcast sometimes instead of another chapter summary paragraph.

Web sites such as Audiopal (www.audiopal.com) enable students to use their cell phones to make podcasts. Without having to register, students can create a talk, dial a toll-free number, record the speech, and then email the speech to you (or to themselves). When you open the email, you can play the recording for the class or post it on a class Web page, wiki, or blog. It is an enormously engaging assignment: “I get to use my cell phone in class?!” At Vocaroo’s Web site (www.vocaroo.com), students can make a voice recording with any computer that has a built-in or attached microphone. These recordings can also be e-mailed or embedded in a Web page or a wiki. Using these online recording sites offers great lessons in inflection. Students are stunned to see how a disembodied voice sounds, and they quickly erase their first recording and try again until the life comes through.
sharing, answering questions, explaining solutions to problems at the board, presenting projects or book reports, reading aloud, telling stories, participating in mock trials, explaining science experiments, and many, many more speaking opportunities. Some of these activities were informal, and some were more formal. Some were part of everyday instruction and routines, and some were special events with special audiences, including grandparents, parents, and community members. You don't teach speaking in isolation; you teach it in the context of all of those activities. The biggest difference is that before you read this book, there may have been little or no focused teaching of speaking skills prior to those activities. Now that will change. To some extent, then, nothing new has been added to the curriculum. We'll just teach what we were teaching, but better, more purposefully, and more specifically.

CHAPTER 14:
Every Day Through the End of the Year

I have never been a fan of teaching skills in isolation, no matter what the skill. I never handed out a worksheet about word choice unless something made a word choice lesson necessary and relevant. Perhaps some novel had unique language—a good time to talk about word choice. A lesson on political parties is not effective without tying it in to a current event, such as the debate on immigration, where students can observe party differences in action. Learning about .com, .gov, and .edu is important knowledge to have in order to be Internet savvy, but why teach this information unless you are going to assign some research project that sends students to the Internet?

Let me make two suggestions, then. Suggestion one is to teach speaking skills when you introduce the special speaking assignment, that one big show. Maybe you have assigned a big book report project. Perhaps you have given students a month to read a novel and prepare an oral presentation in which they dress up as a character from that novel. Maybe, at the end of your poetry unit, you plan to have a poetry café in which students share their poems and adults are invited for tea and cookies. That kind of thing. In my case, when I taught civics, it was the Supreme Court project, as you may have guessed. During this study of the judicial branch, I gave each student the name of a significant Supreme Court case—a case that changed America. I asked them to research the case, understand its significance, and be able to explain how it affects us today. I told them they would present the case to the class and to invited guests (generally, parents and grandparents who
could get off work, and occasionally administrators whom I talked into coming by). Because the Supreme Court is formal, students had to dress up on the day they presented. Students had one month to prepare the five- to six-minute speech. That was not a suggested time frame. The speech had to be between five and six minutes long (nothing less than five minutes would be scored; at six minutes they would be forced to stop). As you can see, I set this up to be a big deal indeed. Situations like these would be good times to teach students how to do an oral presentation.

Suggestion two is to teach speaking skills at the beginning of the year when you set up class procedures. Maybe you don’t have a special presentation until the end of the year. For example, I have worked with schools that have an annual tradition. The entire year builds to some big culminating activity, and exit projects are required. If you teach speaking skills at that time, you miss the benefit of improved communication all year. The students will benefit and carry the skills with them so discussions and speeches in next year’s classes will be better, but from August through May this year, your class missed out. You want improved speaking in your classroom all year.

Maybe you don’t have any special presentation at all during the year but just want better oral communication during routine classroom business—discussions, solving problems at the board, responding to questions, working with partners, and so on. In this case also, early in the year when you set up class procedures, set up speaking procedures: “This is how we turn in papers; this is how we keep the assignment book; this is how we use hall passes; this is how we speak. Final papers must be in ink or word-processed; comments in class require poise and voice.” This is not difficult to set up. Make it known early in the year that speaking matters, and teach students all that is involved even in less formal public speaking.

TEACH THE PROCEDURES

Here is how I teach speaking skills. I take two class periods of about fifty minutes each. For schools on a block plan, this is a one-day lesson; for others, two consecutive days are required. If we are talking about the big show scenario, I recommend this training after the introduction of the project. In that case, on day one, explain the big project and give the big picture of where students are headed. Hand out the project requirements, the rubric, useful materials—the kinds of things you give students when you make the big assignment. On days two and three, teach speaking skills. (Remember, this assumes that none of the teachers in your school has this book and no one has introduced this before. When I was teaching, that was certainly the case, and it has been true in my consulting as well.)

If you aren’t building to the big presentation, block out two periods early in the year when you are setting up class norms. Perhaps you are planning to have weekly discussions about current events. After the first discussion, suggest to students that discussions could be better. Take two days to show them how. The bottom line: starting from nothing, teaching all the skills really can be done in two class periods.

Here is what you should do in those two periods. During the first period devoted to teaching speaking, explain the two parts of speaking (building a speech and performing a speech) and help students clarify these parts in their minds. Then teach the elements of building a speech. In truth, this part is pretty dry: use lecture and explanation, PowerPoint slides, bullet points, the SMART Board. Not the most exciting class, but a very important one. You can explain building a speech in forty minutes. Then, for the last ten or so minutes of the period, introduce the teaser. Read the part of this book about the importance of performance on pages 55–56. Tell students that you will introduce them to PVLEGS, a guaranteed way to become a great speaker. Set up the students for participation and laughter. Stress the need for students to be able to laugh at themselves—that we will laugh as we play with performances.

The second class period is all about performing a speech. There are two ways to conduct this class: using student volunteers and using illustrative video clips. I prefer the first way because I have used this method for a long time. It worked with students in my own classes, and it works when I coach a class as a consultant. If you don’t feel comfortable trying it, go with video clips.

Generally I ask for student volunteers to deliver a speech, and I observe and comment on the speech, focusing on the skill that is going to be introduced next. Then I introduce the skill. I believe that for
maximum effect, student volunteers work best.

TEACHER: I need a volunteer who is brave and willing to laugh at himself or herself. Yes, we might laugh. We are going to play and have fun and begin to become good performers, but because we are not all experts yet, some silly things will happen. Sometimes we will look funny or sound funny. There is always awkwardness learning something new. You can probably ride a bicycle well now, but your first ride without training wheels was humorous. So I need volunteers who realize that we aren't expecting anything other than trying; volunteers who want to learn and are willing to look like they did the first time without training wheels. But the good part is that you will learn something important about your mistakes so you can avoid them when the real performance happens. Wouldn't you rather discover the mistakes now instead of the day of the big show? Any volunteers?

BRANDON: Okay.

TEACHER: Good! Come up to the front of the room here. Tell us about a favorite activity of yours, whatever it is that you know a lot about and love doing, okay?

BRANDON: Okay. (Nervous smile.) Um. (Tugging at shirt tail.) I love playing Grand Theft Auto (Still tugging at shirt tail.). And I like it 'cuz it has lots of action and crashes and, you know, like, action (Pause, nervous smile, wiggling.). What else am I supposed to say? (Tugging at shirt.)? Oh, I know. And the graphics are really cool, and I like driving fast.

Depending on the kind of teacher you are and the relationship you have with your class, you have a couple of options here. I am a performer, and I like to play with the kids. I take the position the student was in and copy the speech, exaggerating the behaviors. I mimic his actions. I readily admit that few teachers will be bold enough to be on stage like this, but if you are brave, and if the kids trust you to make gentle fun of them, the students will love the demonstration and really get the idea that some behaviors are problematic. If you set up the activity well and prequalify the volunteers, this can be memorable and a lot of fun. If you are not comfortable with what may be an over-the-top idea, simply discussing the behaviors you and the class noticed will be effective.

CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR SPEAKING UP

It is important to set up the rules for a discussion and critique of a student sample speech. Harkening back to my comments in Chapter 8 about creating a respectful atmosphere, give students some ground rules. We have to separate the actor from the action; the action may be less than acceptable, but the actor should never be made to feel that be or she is less than acceptable. Explain to students that comments can be made on the performance, but not on the person. Comments must simply state the facts: "He tugged at his shirt"; "She shifted weight from one leg to the other"; "He never looked up from his notes." Explain that constructive comments are helpful, and give a few examples: "I think she could have more feeling when she talks about finding the money"; "He should show with his hands how large the animal was." Finally, let students know that positive comments are appreciated: "His facial expressions were really cool"; "She started out looking nervous but did a great job calming down." Here's how a discussion of Brandon's impromptu speech might go:

TEACHER: Let's talk about Brandon's speech, not the words, though. What did you notice about his actions?

CLASSMATE: Well, he tugged at his shirt a lot.

CLASSMATE: He kept smiling and kinda laughing.

Take another volunteer and give the same assignment.

ARMIDA: (Smiling.) I love shopping and hanging out at the mall. (Head flip to get hair out of eyes.) Me and my friends go every weekend. (Head flip to get hair out of eyes.) We look at shoes a
lot. *(Head flip to get hair out of eyes.)* Oh, and we check out guys. *(Laughing, head flip to get hair out of eyes.)*

**TEACHER:** What did you notice about Armida?

You can see how this works. After the discussion, introduce the skill you want students to work on.

**TEACHER:** The first part of performing a speech is poise. Without poise, listeners will not be able to pay attention to the speech. *(Share the ideas and information from the poise section of this book in Chapter 8, and show the list of problem behaviors on page 61.)* Does someone want to volunteer to give a speech with poise?

Almost certainly the next volunteer will be more poised than Brandon and Armida. That is how fast students pick up on the skill. They haven’t mastered poise, of course, but they have the concept, and they know what to look for. They will be watching speakers with a new awareness and a critical eye. They will be evaluating every speaker they see from now on, including you. All you need to do is reinforce this process as the year goes on, as I will explain later.

Introduce the remaining skills (voice, life, eye contact, gestures, and speed) in the same manner. First, ask another student to volunteer to deliver a speech. Then, invite feedback and steer the discussion toward the next skill you want students to learn. In the following example, we use a scripted speech instead of an impromptu speech and we move on from discussing poise to discussing voice.

**TEACHER:** Now, who would like to volunteer to read the speech I have on the screen?

**PAYAM:** *(Standing up to read the speech.)* There are several things to consider. First, do you feel ready to compete? Second, do you have a game plan you believe in? Third, are you prepared to accept the possibility of defeat? Once you have mentally prepared yourself, only one question should enter your mind: do you want to open with rock, paper, or scissors?